Section 5   Transmitting the Return by Direct Filing Portal (DFP)

DFP allows software developers to provide EROs and taxpayers (who prepare their own tax returns using tax preparation software) the option of filing their California income tax return **directly** with FTB via the Internet. This section contains specific requirements for transmitting returns via the DFP.

One advantage of using DFP is that FTB can handle the taxpayer service contacts once the return is transmitted, unless the error is due to a software problem. For example, if a taxpayer uses DFP software and receives a message that we rejected the return, they can call us to ask about the error code and how to resolve it.

5.1   Tax Preparation Software Functionality

To transmit returns via the DFP, the tax preparation software must:

- Be Internet aware.
- Use the ERO's or taxpayer's existing Internet connection.
- Support 128-bit SSL encryption (connection attempts at lower encryption levels will fail).
- Communicate via HTTPS
- Send one return at a time (no batches)*

    *Note: There is a maximum return file size of 105,000 bytes that can be transmitted through the DFP.

5.2   Establishing a Connection to FTB

Use the secure HTTPS protocol to communicate with the DFP. To establish an encrypted connection and transmit a return, you must use the HTTPS Post method. To retrieve an ACK, you may use the HTTPS Post method through your software or use your customer's Web Browser interface (refer to Section 5.6: Retrieving the ACK from FTB).

Note: The connection will time out after two minutes of inactivity.

Each HTTPS POST header set includes fixed data, variable data names and their corresponding data, and data specific to the action you want to perform (i.e., submit a return or retrieve an ACK). In the example below, fixed data is in `plain text`, variable data names are in **bold**, and the corresponding variable data is in *italics*.

```
POST / dfp/postreturn.asp HTTP/1.1
Accept: */*
Accept-Language: en-us
Accept-Encoding: gzip, deflate
Content-Type: application/x-www-form-urlencoded
User-Agent: (Name of software & Version Number)
Host: 209.210.72.110
Connection: Keep-Alive
```

```
ETIN=12345&EFIN=123456&Password=mypassword&TP_SSN=123456789&B1=S
ubmit&formfilled=1
```

Descriptions of the variable data:
- **User-Agent –** the name and version number of your software.
- **ETIN –** your five-digit DFP ETIN.
- **EFIN –** the six-digit EFIN of the ERO (if paid preparer) or DFP Transmitter (if online).
- **Password –** the password associated with your DFP ETIN
- **TP_SSN –** the nine-digit SSN for the primary taxpayer

With each return transmittal or ACK retrieval, we will authenticate the ETIN, EFIN, and Password.

Note: The ETIN and password for DFP are assigned by FTB and are different from your regular e-file ETIN and password. Contact FTB at (916) 845-6180 for assignment of your DFP ETIN and password.

5.3 Transmitting the Return to FTB

To transmit the return to FTB, connect to:

- https://webapp.ftb.ca.gov/dfp/postreturn.asp

Add the **"Return_Data"** and the return data to the HTTPS POST in the following sequence:

- Transmitter Identification Records – TRANA and TRANB
- Tax Return Records – Including the return (RET) and all related form (FRM), schedule (SCH), authentication (ATH), statement (STM), and summary (SUM) records
- Recap Record – RECAP

5.4 FTB Responses to Return Filing

The DFP responds to all communications in HTML format. The top of the HTML page contains a comment block with the response data (e.g., the DCN, a transmission error message, the ACK).

Since Web browsers will not interpret the comment block, the bottom of the page is HTML formatted and readable by a Web browser and the end user. The examples on the following pages show the information we return in the body of the HTML. We recommend you use this text in your product. However, if your software interprets the response, you must include the required information listed after the example.

Successful Filing
We respond with a 14-digit Declaration Control Number (DCN) when you successfully file a return. The DFP DCN is different from the DCNs used for modem-transmitted returns. Refer to Section 5.5 for more information.

Example of a successful filing response:

<html>
<head>
<!--11834906752596-->
<meta name http-equiv="Content-Type" content="text/html; charset=iso-8859-1">
</head>
<body>
We received your return for initial processing. Your Declaration Control Number (DCN) is: <DCN Number>

Please enter this information on your California e-file Return Authorization for Individuals (form FTB 8453 or FTB 8453-OL), or California e-file Signature Authorization for Individuals (form FTB 8879).

We will complete the initial processing within 24 hours. After 24 hours, use your DCN to pick up your return acknowledgement.

Your return acknowledgement will tell you if we accepted your return for complete processing or if we rejected it. If we reject your return, we will provide you with an explanation of the error(s) and instructions on how to correct your return.

To retrieve your return acknowledgement:

Use our online service
Use your e-file software*
*
</body>
</html>

Required information:
- The DCN for the return
- Options for retrieving the ACK file

- o Via your software product
- o From FTB's Website
- FTB's Website for additional information
  - o www.ftb.ca.gov

Unsuccessful Filing
When the DFP is unavailable or identifies invalid login or header information, we will respond with an error message. Refer to Section 5.8 for responses to DFP system errors.

<u>Invalid Login Information</u>
If the ETIN, EFIN, or password is not valid, our response will be "**Login Unsuccessful**".

Example:

> *<html>*
> *<head>*
> *<!--Login Unsuccessful-->*
> *<meta name http-equiv="Content-Type" content="text/html; charset=iso-8859-1">*
> *</head>*
>
> *<body>*
> Your login to our Direct filing portal was unsuccessful. Please make sure your Electronic Transmitter Identification Number (ETIN) and password are correct. *
*
> *</body>*
> *</html>*

Required information:
- The transaction was unsuccessful.
- The problem is the login credentials.
- The solution is to contact the software vendor.

<u>Invalid Header Information</u>
If any required element in the HTTPS header is missing, we will reply with "**DFP Format Problem**".

Example:

> *<html>*
> *<head>*
> *<!--DFP Format Problem-->*
> *<meta name http-equiv="Content-Type" content="text/html; charset=iso-8859-1">*
> *</head>*
>
> *<body>*
> The format of your return is incorrect. Please review the DFP specifications in FTB Pub. 1346, e-file Specifications and Record Layouts for California Individual Income Tax Returns.
>
> If you need further assistance, please contact our e-Programs Customer Service Unit at (916) 845-0353 or e-file@ftb.ca.gov.

Required information:
- The transaction was unsuccessful.
- The problem is the DFP format.
- The solution is to contact the software vendor

5.5 Declaration Control Number (DCN)

Unlike the DCN for modem-transmitted returns which is generated by the transmitter, the DFP DCN is a unique, 14-digit number normally issued by FTB. It is generated in the following pattern:

Position 1 – 2	=	"11"
Position 3 – 13	=	FTB generated
Position 14	=	Last digit of the process year

Some transmitters may still choose to issue their own DCNs to their clients. Contact our e-file Coordinator at 916-845-6180 for more information about this DFP option.

5.6 Retrieving the ACK from FTB

With DFP, taxpayers and EROs have the option of picking up their ACK from our Website or through your software.

From FTB's Website
To retrieve the ACK from our Website, the ERO or taxpayer must:
- Have a Web browser capable of 128-bit SSL encryption.
- Access our Website at www.ftb.ca.gov and search for "e-file status"
- Provide the SSN and DCN associated with the return.

Through Your Software
Your software must:
- Securely connect to https://webapp.ftb.ca.gov/dfp/ack.asp.
- Add the following variable and data to the HTTPS POST:
  - **DCN** – the 14-digit Declaration Control Number

To pick up **test** ACKs, use https://webapp.ftb.ca.gov/dfp/acktest.asp.

5.7 FTB Responses to ACK Requests

The DFP responds to all ACK requests in HTML format. The ACK data will be in the comment block.

The examples on the following pages show the information we return in the body of the HTML. We recommend you use this text in your product. However, if your software interprets the response (e.g., explain the error message as it applies to your software), you must include the required information listed after the example.

ACK for an Accepted Return
If we accept a return, the ACK will contain the following:
- Original transmitter records (TRANA and TRANB)
- ACK Key Record
- ACK RECAP Record

Example:

<html>
<head>
*<!--0120****TRANA952700763EXAMPLE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT   PREPARER*
S041420001234500010501AV331500 P #
*0120****TRANB9527007639645 BUTTERFIELD AVE   RIVERSIDE CA 92507*
9096843856 #
*0120****ACK   2530041611234500105010001000000000027+R*
041420000331500103090   01   ca#
*0120****RECAP   0000000000011234500105010000000000000001   000002*
#-->
<meta name http-equiv="Content-Type" content="text/html; charset=iso-8859-1">
</head>
<body>
Social Security Number: 123456789
Declaration Control Number (DCN): 11888000000006

Status: Accepted

We accepted your e-file return for processing on: <date accepted>

Thank you for participating in the California e-file Program.
Visit our e-Services page to:

Check the status of your refund
View your account balance due
Verify payments you've made
Make tax payments online *
*
</body>
</html>

Required information:
- The date we accepted the return.

-

  ACKs for a Rejected Return
  If we reject a return, the ACK will contain the following:
  - Original transmitter records (TRANA and TRANB)
  - ACK Key Record
  - ACK Error Record
  - ACK RECAP record

FTB hard codes the top and bottom portion of the body and allows the middle portion to be dynamic. This allows display of multiple error codes without repeating basic information. In the examples below, we placed the dynamic information in a table.

Error codes fall into two general categories: correctable by the end user and not correctable by the end user. Correctable errors are generally keying errors made by your customer (e.g., invalid EFW date). Errors that are not correctable by the end user are generally software problems (e.g., incorrect data type). The numbers for this type of error codes are marked by **bold and underline** in Section 8.

Correctable Errors
If the error is correctable, your customer should be able to fix the error and resubmit their return. The ACK File will contain the code for each error identified by the DFP.

Note: We will **generally** issue a new DCN for the retransmitted return. They must use this new DCN to look up the status of their retransmitted return.

Example:

> *<html>*
> *<head>*
> *<!--0120****TRANA952700763EXAMPLE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT   PREPARER*
> *S04142000123450010501AV331500 P #*
> *0120****TRANB9527007639645 BUTTERFIELD AVE   RIVERSIDE CA 92507*
> *9096843856 #*
> *0120****ACK   2530041611234500105010001000000000027+R*
> *041420000331500103090   01   ca#*
> *0120****ACKR01253004161010103705410000000000000000000000000000000000000*
> *00000000000000000000000000000000000000000 #*
> *0120****RECAP   00000000000112345001050100000000000000001   000002*
> *#-->*
> *<meta name http-equiv="Content-Type" content="text/html; charset=iso-8859-1">*
> *</head>*
>
> *<body>*
> We are unable to accept your e-file return. We found the following error(s):
> <Reasons will be listed here>
> Your return is not considered filed. If you attempted to e-file your own return, please correct the error and resend your California tax return. If you need further assistance, contact our Taxpayer Services Center:
>
> Toll-free in the United States: (800) 852-5711

Non-correctable Errors

The ACK for a non-correctable error will contain the code for each error that was generated when we attempted to accept the return for processing. Since the error is not correctable, your customer will be unable to correct and resubmit their return. They must contact our Taxpayer Service Center or you for further assistance. If we are unable to resolve the problem, we will contact you.

Example:

<html>
<head>
*<!--0120****TRANA952700763EXAMPLE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT   PREPARER*
S04142000123450010501AV331500 P #
*0120****TRANB9527007639645 BUTTERFIELD AVE   RIVERSIDE CA 92507*
9096843856 #
*0120****ACK   25300416112345001050100010000000027+R*
0414200000331500103090   01   ca#
*0120****ACKR012530041610101037054100000000000000000000000000000000000*
000000000000000000000000000000000000000 #
*0120****RECAP   000000000001123450010501000000000000000001   000002*
#-->
<meta name http-equiv="Content-Type" content="text/html; charset=iso-8859-1">
</head>

<body>
We are unable to accept your e-file return. We found the following error(s):
<Reasons will be listed here>
Your return is not considered filed. If you attempted to e-file your own return, please correct the error and resend your California tax return. If you need further assistance, contact our Taxpayer Services Center:

Toll-free in the United States: (800) 852-5711
From outside the United States: (916) 845-6500 (not toll free)

Telephone assistance is available year-round from 7 a.m. until 7 p.m. Monday through Friday, except state holidays. We may modify these hours without notice to meet operational needs.

Assistance for persons with disabilities: We comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Persons with hearing or speech impairments please call TTY/TDD (800) 822-6268.

If you filed using a tax preparer, please contact your tax preparer.
Thank you for participating in the California e-file Program.*</body>*
</html>

Other Responses
In certain circumstances, we will respond with a message other than an ACK. These situations include when an ACK is requested before we process the return and using an incorrect SSN/DCN combination.

<u>ACK Not Available</u>
If an ACK is requested before we have completely processed the return, we will provide a "Pending" response.

Example:

<html>
<!--ACK not available -->
<meta name http-equiv="Content-Type" content="text/html; charset=iso-8859-1">

<body>
Status: Pending

Your return is in pre-processing. Please allow 24 hours for us to complete the initial processing of your return.

If more than 24 hours have passed, please contact our Taxpayer Services Center:

Toll-free in the United States: (800) 852-5711
From outside the United States: (916) 845-6500 (not toll free)

Telephone assistance is available year-round from 7 a.m. until 7 p.m. Monday through Friday, except state holidays. We may modify these hours without notice to meet operational needs.

Assistance for persons with disabilities: We comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Persons with hearing or speech impairments please call TTY/TDD (800) 822-6268.

If you filed using a tax preparer, please contact your tax preparer.

Thank you for participating in the California e-file Program. *
*
</body>
</html>

<u>SSN/DCN No Match</u>
If your customer uses an invalid SSN/DCN combination, we will provide a "Status Unknown" message.

Example:

> *<html>*
> *<head>*
> ***<!--TP Login Unsuccessful -->***
> *<meta name http-equiv="Content-Type" content="text/html; charset=iso-8859-1">*
> *</head>*
> *<body>*
> **The Social Security Number and Declaration Control Number combination you entered does not match our records.**
>
> **Please go back and reenter the information. Be sure to check for and remove any letters, spaces, and special characters (such as "-"). Make the necessary changes and submit your information again.**
>
> **If you are married filing jointly, be sure you use the first social security number listed on the California e-file Return Authorization for Individuals (form FTB 8453 or FTB 8453-OL), or California e-file Signature Authorization for Individuals (form FTB 8879). For further assistance:**
>
> **If you e-filed your own return, please contact our Taxpayer Services Center:**
>
> **Toll-free in the United States: (800) 852-5711**
>
> **From outside the United States: (916) 845-6500 (not toll free)**
>
> **Telephone assistance is available year-round from 7 a.m. until 7 p.m. Monday through Friday, except state holidays. We may modify these hours without notice to meet operational needs.**
>
> **Assistance for persons with disabilities: We comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Persons with hearing or speech impairments please call TTY/TDD (800) 822-6268.**
>
> **If you filed using a tax preparer, please contact your tax preparer.**
>
> **Thank you for participating in the California e-file Program.***</body>*
> *</html>*

<u>Account Locked</u>
We allow a taxpayer three attempts to retrieve their ACK from our Website per 24-hour period. After the third unsuccessful attempt to retrieve an ACK with a particular SSN or DCN, FTB's system will lock out the account for 24 hours. FTB will display the following message:

> *<html>*
> *<head>*

<!--Account Locked -->
<meta name http-equiv="Content-Type" content="text/html; charset=iso-8859-1">
</head>

<body>
You have exceeded the maximum number of attempts allowed for checking the status of your e-file return. Please wait 24 hours before you try again.

If you need further assistance, contact our Taxpayer Services Center:

Toll-free in the United States: (800) 852-5711
From outside the United States: (916) 845-6500 (not toll free)

Telephone assistance is available year-round from 7 a.m. until 7 p.m. Monday through
Friday, except state holidays. We may modify these hours without notice to meet operational needs.

Assistance for persons with disabilities: We comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Persons with hearing or speech impairments please call TTY/TDD (800) 822-6268.

If you filed using a tax preparer, please contact your tax preparer.
Thank you for participating in the California e-file Program.*</body>*
</html>

When the taxpayer calls FTB regarding an unsuccessful attempt to retrieve their ACK, FTB's Customer Service Representative will provide a verbal acknowledgement, providing the taxpayer with the status of their return.

5.8   FTB Responses to DFP Systems Errors

If the DFP is unavailable when your customer attempts to file a return or request an ACK, we will send the following message:

<html>
<head>
<!--DFP is unavailable-->
<meta name http-equiv="Content-Type" content="text/html; charset=iso-8859-1">
</head>

<body>
Our Internet filing system is temporarily unavailable. Please try your request again later.

http://www.ftb.ca.gov/maintain.asp
</body>
</html>